THE MINISTER OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI KINJARAPPU YERRANNAIDU) : (a) and (b) Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), Employment Assurances Schemes (EAS) and Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) are major rural employment programmes being implemented by the Centre throughout the country including the State of Madhya Pradesh to provide employment to rural poor living below the poverty line. According to existing guidelines, preference is given to those belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe communities.

Out of various employment programmes, assured employment of at least hundred days of unskilled manual work to rural poor who are in need of employment and seeking it during lean agricultural season is provided under EAS.

[English]

Kuttipuram-Guruvayur Railway Line

3631. SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 4099 on 19.12.1996 reg. Survey of Railway Line and state:

(a) whether the alignment of the Kuttipuram-Guruvayur railway line in Kerala has since been decided;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the estimated cost and the total distance of the proposed line;

(d) the time by which the said line will be completed; and

(e) in case the alignment/results are not yet finalised, the reasons for the delay and the time by which they are expected to be finalised?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The length of the alternative alignment vary from 30 km. to 50 km. and the cost from Rs. 68 crs. to Rs. 112 crs.

(d) During the 10th plan.

(e) There are four different alignment which have been recommended by the people representatives of the area. The relative merits and economics of these alignments are under examination in consultation with the Railway to determine the best alignment. The selection of alignment is likely to be completed within the next 2-3 months.

Doubling of Guntur-Vijayawada Rail Line

3632. SHRI K.S. RAYUDU :
DR. M. JAGANNATH :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to double railway line between Guntur and Vijayawada in view of increasing passenger traffic;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government also propose to introduce a new train from Machilipatnam as requested by Railways mazdoor union;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Railway Trade Unions at Vijayawada have urged the Railway authorities to divert iron ore traffic to Machilipatnam Port from Madras Port to reduce goods traffic in Madras; and

(f) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) and (b) The work of construction of third line between Vijayawada and Krishna Canal is currently in progress. The traffic on Krishna Canal-Guntur section has not yet reached the level, to justify its doubling.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Yes, Sir. In a Memorandum submitted to Hon'ble Minister of Railways on 5.7.97, South Central Railway Mazdoor Union of Vijayawada Division had suggested diversion of iron ore traffic to Machilipatnam port.

(f) As and when necessary infrastructure is developed at Machilipatnam to handle this traffic by Port authorities, Railways can move the traffic.

[Translation]

Task Force

3633. SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA :
SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited propose to set up a 'Task Force' for the disposal of pending O.B. and to improve fault-repairing service;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the above task force is likely to be set up and start functioning?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes Sir. A Task Force has already been set up in MTNL Delhi for the disposal of pending OB's and to improve upon fault repairing services.

(b) The Task Force has been set up under the Chairmanship of one General Manager with five officers of Dy. GM level as members of the Task Force.

Objective of the Task Force is :

(i) to work out plans where maximum number of OB's can be implemented with minimum efforts;

(ii) to suggest ways to improve upon the fault repair services.

(c) Sir, Task Force has already started functioning w.e.f. 4.7.1997.

[English]

Construction of New Buildings

3634. SHRI KESHAB MAHANTA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to construct new buildings of the railway stations in Assam during 1997-98; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) and (b) Remodelling of station building at Rangiya has been taken up. Station buildings on new line between Guwahati Jogighopa have also been taken up.

Global Telecom Pact

3635. SHRI SANDIPAN THORAT : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have made commitment to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) for evolving a road map-on the global telecom pact and Information Technology Agreements (IIA);

(b) if so, the details of the commitment made as per I.T.A. with WTO and details of action initiated in this regard;

(c) whether FICC have submitted a memorandum to the Government in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith action taken or proposed to be taken thereon; and

(e) the details of action plan for 1997-98?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) to (e) the information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Repairing of Railway Tracks

3636. SHRI CHANDRABHUSHAN SINGH :
SHRI VISHAMBHAR PRASAD NISHAD :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the condition of railway tracks between Manipuri and Farrukhabad and between Shikohabad and Farrukhabad are very dilapidated;

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to repair/ renovate the above tracks;

(c) whether there is any proposal to electrify the above tracks;

(d) if so, the funds allocated therefor;

(e) whether there is any scheme for running of an Express train from Farrukhabad to Delhi; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) and (b) Speed on Shikohabad-Mainpuri has been raised to 60 kmph after carrying out track works. For the balance length, renewal is being proposed in the future Works Programme depending on availability of funds.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) No, Sir.

(f) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Private Courier Service

3637. SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether due to the negligence of the postal department Private Courier Service has made its position strong but the Postal charges of reliable courier service is higher and charges of some couriers out of them is many times higher as compared to the speed post due to which people use cheaper courier service but they are not reliable as a result of which people have to face lot of difficulties;

(b) if so, whether action is being taken to streamline the speed post service of the postal department; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) No, Sir. Emergence of express communication needs all over the world is not due to the negligence of the Postal Department. The Speed Post Service is quite reliable and its rates are reasonable compared to other couriers. Postal Department has been focussing on the network development, technology input and business expansion of Speed Post in order to meet the express communication and distribution needs of the customers effectively. Its network & revenue is increasing consistently.